pretty unrewarding it proved. I removed one clumsy shearwater who seemed determined to knock the trap over and a fat frog which was busy eating all the moths as they came along. *Xanthorhoe spadicearia* D. & S. was the only addition, but there was a welcome second *E. lichenea*. The most striking feature was the total absence of any *A. agathina* despite the fact that the area of heather where it had been so numerous was only half a mile away. So even on a very small island it would have been easy to overlook this insect. *P. glareosa* on the other hand was prevalent throughout the island and was not restricted to the heather areas. *E. obelisca* was usually numerous at all the traps, as were *A. xanthomista* and *G. flavago,* all these moths generally regarded as being scarce. The occurrence of *V. atalanta* in plenty, several *R. sacraria* and a single *H. armigera* indicated that it was a good migratory year.

We left on the 6th of September after a most enjoyable five days. The fondest memories I shall have will not be of the moths but the shearwaters—stupid and annoying but so very appealing and charming. There is still a lot to be found on the island. We recorded 48 species and I hope we shall have some further successes when we go again in 1974. The only records of the area prior to my visit were made by a past warden who listed 94 species; this has now been increased to 110. If anyone has any records of the area I should be very grateful to have them for in the near future it may be possible to publish a list of the island's macrolepidoptera.

Finally, I would like to thank John Davies, the warden, and Dr. Bray of the Nature Conservancy for permission to collect in the reserve and for all their help and advice.

Among the British Lepidoptera, 1973

By B. G. Withers, B.Sc.

"Onaway", 18 Broadstone Road, Harpenden, Herts., AL5 1RG

(*concluded from page 44*)

the following morning. Several females of *M. rubi* were early arrivals and showed a remarkable range of size. *Lycophotia porphyrea* D. & S. was common and other noteworthy species included *Mythimna pudorina* D. & S., *Boarmia roboraria* D. & S., *H. impluviata, C. pustulata* and a very late *M. abruptaria*. Little collecting was done the following week as we were preparing for our Continental holiday beginning 30th June.

Our return on 12th July was marked by warm but stormy conditions and the garden trap was the only source of moths at this time, with one specimen of *Plemyria rubiginata* D. & S. on the 15th being the best of a poor bunch. An evening trip to the Chilterns on the 18th produced 50 species of macro in rather cool, damp conditions. *D. blomeri* was fairly common

with some very small specimens among their number, while *Abraxas sylvata* Scop. abounded as usual; singletons of *Acronicta leporina* L., *Apamea characterea* Hübn. and *Mesoleuca albicillata* L. were also taken. Weather conditions again deteriorated for several days and it was not until the 24th that I ran the m.v. on Nomansland Common where 65 species of macro were recorded in an hour and a half. *Cosmia pyralina* D. & S. was very common and mainly in mint condition while *Pseudoterpna pruinata* Hufn. was abundant. *Eilema complana* L. was also well to the fore and other species of note were *Ennomos erosaria* D. & S. (a female which laid freely), *Spaelotis ravida* D. & S., *Euphyia unangulata* Haw., *P. transversata* and *Eupithecia succenturiata* L. Further evenings in the same locality on the 28th and 30th produced many of the species referred to above but nothing more of note.

Warm weather on the 31st prompted us to take a couple of days' leave and make a trip to Dorset, where, near Studland, we were forced to camp on the roadside amidst a plethora of caravans and dormobiles whose occupants had found, as we had, that pitches on campsites in this area at this time are at a premium to say the least! We operated the m.v. light at Shell Bay within earshot of the ferry and moths soon arrived in numbers. Prominent among these were *Mythimna litoralis* Curt. which was fairly plentiful and a few *M. straminea* Treits. Perhaps the best of 35 species was a single example of *Scopula emutaria* Hübn. The Pyrale *Anerastia lotella* Hübn. also put in a welcome appearance. The following morning, 1st August, we dismantled the tent from the roadside and drove to Portland where butterflies, particularly *Lysandra coridon* Poda., were exceptionally abundant, and some good vars. of this species were taken in the evening by inspecting the resting thousands on the grass stems. One male var. *fowleri* and several var. *basijuncta* were among these, also one male with exceptionally large underside spots. I do not possess a copy of Bright and Leeds, so am at a loss to know what to call it. The memory of this brilliant day with the banks seething with *coridon* will long remain to cheer these dull winter days.

That night we operated the portable m.v. near Church Ope Cove having pitched the tent on the cliff top in a stiff breeze. Two fellow entomologists, who had also been hunting *coridon* vars. bedded down alongside us. The light was first of all run with a sheet and produced hosts of moths, *Noctua pronuba* L. being in such numbers that they almost smothered the sheet and numerous individuals ascended the trouser legs of the onlookers giving rise to unexpected and unseemly war dances. However, among these vulgar plebs were more select species such as *Cryphia muralis* Forst. (five specimens), *Gnophos obscuratus* D. & S., *Perizoma bifaciata* Haw. and two late *Idaea degeneraria* Hübn. A number of Pyrales was also noted, including fine fresh specimens of *Pyrausta cingulata* L. and *Oncocera semirubella* Scop. and several *Mecyna asinalis* Hübn. At midnight the generator was refilled and the m.v. light

attached to a Robinson trap and left overnight. The following morning the trap contained about a thousand moths, of which *N. pronuba* constituted about 90 per cent. Among this gathering we found single specimens of *S. degeneraria* and *Agrotis trux* Hübn. During the late morning and early afternoon, we examined a large stand of reed mace at Lodmoor, and found pupae of *Nonagria typhae* Thunb. there in plenty which produced some fine moths a week or so later. With weather conditions showing signs of deteriorating we drove the 120 miles to my parents' home at Chipping Norton where we stayed overnight and operated a static Robinson trap there in the garden. Single specimens of *S. ravida* and *Rhyacia simulans* Hufn. were the most noteworthy insects in a good-sized catch which again comprised a large percentage of *N. pronuba*. We returned to Harpenden early in the morning of 3rd August.

Owing to indifferent weather, little of interest appeared at the garden trap and on two trips made to Nomansland Common. The beginning of a heatwave on the 19th inspired us to travel to Suffolk where a total of 66 species of macro came to our favoured spot near Lakenheath. One of the first to arrive was a very fine specimen of *Scopula rubiginata* Hufn. and another equally fresh specimen of this species appeared much later in the evening. *Arenostola phragmitidis* Hübn. was plentiful as was *Semiothisa clathrata* L. and a worn melanic specimen of the latter was taken. *Phragmatobia fuliginosa* L. was also surprisingly common and other items of interest were several each of *Harpyia furcula* Clerck and *Agrotis vestigialis* Hufn. and a single specimen of *Photedes fluxa* Hübn. The early part of the morning of the 11th was occupied with setting the previous night's prizes and later we drove on to Walberswick pitching camp on the dunes by the sea amongst a horde of other campers. Toadflax was growing in abundance nearby and a handful of this plant eventually produced about two dozen pupae of *Eupithecia linariata* D. & S. Portable m.v. operated in the middle of a nearby reed-bed produced a host of moths of 42 species, including *Photedes brevilinea* Fenn. in abundance along with considerable numbers of *Archanara dissoluta* Treits., *A. neurica* Hübn. and *S. albovenosa*. A single specimen of *Euxoa cursoria* Hufn. was also taken, evidently a stray from the nearby sandhills. Despite a stiff onshore breeze, an actinic trap left outside the tent all night produced four each of *Apamea oblonga* Haw., and *E. cursoria,* also *S. ravida, L. suasa, P. brevilinea* and a single specimen of the local Crambid *Agriphila latistria* Haw.

The heatwave continued and I decided to go to Chipping Norton to try for further *R. simulans,* and arrived there on the evening of the 13th having dropped my wife off at Harpenden. A further specimen of *simulans* was taken at m.v. light that night and during the day I found yet another at rest between wooden planks in a barn on a friend's farm. A trip to Charlecote near Warwick was rather disappointing, largely due, I think, to a full moon. Three *Cosmia affinis* L. were noted, but no *Cosmia*

diffinis L. for which this area is renowned. I understand it was taken in numbers at sugar a day or so later—perhaps this method would have been a better bet, but I was not carrying any "sugar" on this occasion. The commonest moth to m.v. was the tiny pyrale *Acentria nivea* Olivier which swarmed, and the only other "macro" of interest was a male *Orgyia antiqua* L. which arrived at the light at almost 11 p.m. I returned to Chipping Norton to find another *R. simulans* awaiting me in the static trap set in my parents' garden.

The next two days were very hot and being mainly occupied with social events, it was not until the 16th that I was able to visit Nomansland again; on this occasion 60 species of macro arrived at m.v. light within two hours. Among these were *C. affinis, Amphipoea oculea* L., *Ipimorpha subtusa* D. & S., *S. ravida, Scoliopteryx libatrix* L. and several *Eupithecia icterata* Vill. *P. pruinata* was still in evidence but by now well past its prime. The heatwave gave way to much cooler conditions the following day and it was in rather chilly and very clear weather that we ran our light in Nottinghamshire, among birches on the Edwinstone-Ollerton Road. Our main quarry, *Enargia paleacea* Esp. failed to put in an appearance but a few fine specimens of *Diarsia dahlii* Hübn. were a welcome consolation prize. Three specimens of *Xanthia icteritia* Hufn. also arrived (this seems very early for us southerners, but I understand the species appears earlier in more northern parts), including one of the form *flavescens*. In all only 25 species were recorded by 11 p.m. and so we packed up and made the return journey down the M1 that night.

On the afternoon of the 18th we made a quick trip to Surrey and, having pitched camp near Box Hill and arranged for a plug-in for the Robinson trap, hied to White Downs where both portable m.v. light and an actinic tube were operated. The cooler weather in the north had not yet reached the south-east and so this warm and rather hazy night saw 52 species of macro at the two lights. *Horisme vitalbata* D. & S. was fairly common and several *D. cultraria* were also noted. Other species of note included *Aplocera efformata* Guen., *S. ornata, Amphipyra pyramidea* L. and *Eilema deplana* Esp. A single specimen of *Dioryctria abietella* D. & S. at the actinic tube made a welcome addition to my growing collection of Pyralidae. The trap at the farm where we camped produced little of interest apart from a spate of rather worn *H. vitalbata*. However, one female of this species obliged with ova and I succeeded in breeding a small batch of pupae which await emergence in the spring. After a brief unsettled spell, fine, warm conditions returned in time for the Bank Holiday week-end, and on the 24th we travelled to Dorset, breaking our journey in the New Forest where two specimens of *Scopula marginepunctata* Goeze. were taken from the walls of the camp buildings at Hollands Wood. We called in on Donald Russwurm at Brockenhurst and were amazed at the number of butterflies on the *Buddleia* bushes in his garden. *A. urticae* predominated,

with *I. io* a close second, and the occasional *Vanessa atalanta* L. Driving on to Dorset we found similar swarms of butterflies at Hemp Agrimony on the heathland between Stoborough and Arne, and an abundance of *Pararge aegeria* L. in the shadier spots. That night we again ran the m.v. at Shell Bay where we were surprised to see *M. litoralis* still flying, and other interesting species included *A. vestigialis, Archanara sparganii* Esp. (two males), *Plusia festucae* L. (three specimens) and *Orthonama vittata* Borkh. A Robinson trap with an actinic tube attached left on the heathland where we had pitched camp produced a number of *Eulithis testata* L. and little else of interest. During the daytime on the 25th, we drove out to Portland where we found a few *L. coridon* still flying, including a female virtually devoid of underside spots and a very worn var. *fowleri* of the same sex. *Lycaena phlaeas* L. and *Hipparchia semele* L. were also fairly common but rather worn. Later, at Lodmoor, we again investigated the reed mace bed but found that almost all the *N. typhae* had emerged. I was somewhat horrified to see a notice nearby announcing that this area is scheduled for development. I hope that the local Naturalists' Trust members are maintaining a vigil over such matters as these, or maybe they are too busy policing their ill-managed hilltop "reserve" and devoting their funds to the prosecution of any innocent who inadvertently strays on to it. I sincerely trust that the latter is not the case.

We returned to Shell Bay in the evening to operate the m.v. on one side of the road leading to the ferry and an actinic trap on the other side. The evening was warmer than the previous one with a slight breeze preventing any early mist from forming. It turned out an excellent one for moths, with 44 species, including three specimens of *Ochropleura praecox* L., a species I particularly wanted. Also of interest were *P. festucae* (two), *N. typhae* (two large females), *Coenobia rufa* Haw. (one), *A. sparganii* (one female), *P. hippocastanaria* and a female of the scarce Geometer *Cyclophora pendularia* Clerck which laid frugally; four healthy pupae eventually resulted. The Pyrales were well represented by *Chilo phragmitella* Hübn., *Calamotropha paludella* Hflbn., and *A. latistria*. Later in the evening we were visited by the warden of the nearby nature reserve and his assistant to whom I subsequently supplied a list of species taken in this locality in 1973. On the 26th, butterflies were abundant all over the Purbeck area in glorious, warm sunshine. *Lysandra bellargus* Rott. made a good showing near Corfe Castle and several *Thymelicus acteon* Rott. were also observed in the same area. *A. urticae* was especially abundant on Hemp Agrimony around Wareham, along with numerous *I. io* and *V. atalanta* and *H. semele* and *Pyronia tithonus* L. were in some numbers, but mostly very worn. The evening was less promising with a cool mist, but light on the edge of an Army Range between Wool and Stoborough produced 40 species of macro. About the first insect to arrive was an exceptionally large female of *Hepialus sylvina* L. and the

golden shower of *Ennomos alniaria* L. put in its usual appearance. *Lymantria monacha* L., *Hoplodrina ambigua* D. & S. and *Tholera cespitis* D. & S. were the only other species worthy of note. Early the following morning we began our journey home, stopping at Hollands Wood where a female *Stilbia anomala* Haw. was found on the toilet block walls.

An unsettled and cooler spell followed, and it was not until 2nd September that I ventured forth again to Nomansland Common. On this occasion 20 species of macro were recorded in two hours including a second brood example of *E. linariata* and the first local specimen of *X. icteritia*. On the 3rd Ashridge was my venue when I noted 23 species. *Chloroclysta citrata* L. was quite common but worn and two females of *E. alniaria* graced the sheet fairly early on. Later two melanic specimens of *Thera obeliscata* Hübn. arrived and these were soon followed by singletons of *Paradiarsia glareosa* Esp., *X. icteritia* and *Amphipyra berbera* Rungs. With the weather becoming even warmer I drove to Chipping Norton where I spent most of the day working on my car which needed attention. In the evening however I found time to run the portable m.v. for an hour or so two miles from the town, near the village of Cornwell. A female *E. alniaria* again showed up early, soon followed by *Epione repandaria* Hufn. Three specimens of *Atethmia centrago* Haw. and a single specimen of *I. subtusa* were also notable among a total of 22 species.

The warm weather persisted, and on the 6th two specimens of *Xanthia citrago* L. were taken in a Robinson trap which I had established at Rothamsted Manor with the main purpose of capturing female craneflies for culture purposes. Three further specimens of this moth turned up subsequently during the month and I have resolved to beat the neighbouring lime trees in the spring, now that I know for certain that this species is relatively common in the area. Portable m.v. at Symondshyde Great Wood on the evening of the 6th attracted 26 species including two more *E. linariata* and one *Photedes pygmina* Haw. The Manor trap produced a further *X. citrago* and two very fine *A. centrago* on the 7th and in the afternoon we set out for the New Forest for the weekend. On arriving at Hollands Wood where we pitched camp we found the toilet block walls and windows a veritable El Dorado. The first moth I picked up was *Xestia castanea* Esp. and later, on the same building, specimens of *Eupithecia phoeniceata* Ramb. and *Rhodometra sacraria* L. The second block produced a fine *Chloroclysta siterata* Hufn. That evening we operated the portable m.v. light near Rhinefield enclosure and placed an actinic trap on the edge of nearby heathland. The evening was very warm although clear and with the moon approaching full. Thirty-seven species of macro were recorded, notable among these being several each of *X castanea, Xestia agathina* Dup. and *P. glareosa,* two of the last mentioned being exceptionally pink in colour. Later another *C. siterata* arrived followed by two *P. hippocastanaria* and several *Cymatophorima diluta* D. & S. One specimen of

Crambus hamella Thunb. was also taken. During the evening we were bothered by a number of hornets arriving on the sheet and a keeper who arrived to check our credentials informed us that hornets had been scarce this year—just our luck to be invaded!

The following morning I took a further *R. sacraria* from the window of a campsite building and the day turned out again very warm and sunny. Butterflies, particularly *V. atalanta* and *A. urticae,* were very common. Night-time operations at Hollands Wood were somewhat marred by bright moonlight; however 28 species of macro were recorded, including a further *C. siterata,* several *Cyclophora punctaria* L. and late specimens of *Noctua fimbriata* Schreber and *Lymantria monacha* L. The "ablutions blocks" produced three specimens of the immigrant pyrale *Udea ferrugalis* Hübn.

A weekend in Chipping Norton in mid-September produced very little of interest, despite warm weather. The most notable feature was the number of *V. atalanta* at ivy bloom in several localities, up to 20 being seen on one small clump. On our return to Hertfordshire I operated the portable m.v. lamp in the Symondshyde area. A stiff breeze kept numbers of species down, but quality more than made up for quantity, single specimens of *Dryobotodes eremita* F., *R. sacraria* and *Xanthia aurago* D. & S. being notable among only 14 species. Little of interest was taken in the next fortnight, apart from a couple of *Larentia clavaria* Haw. in the Robinson traps locally. The weather was rather unsettled and cold until the end of the month.

Rather warmer weather on 2nd October prompted me to drive down to Portland for an evening. A stop at St. Leonards, near Ringwood, produced a specimen of *Aporophyla nigra* Haw. at rest and I arrived in Weymouth in the late afternoon. A stiff sea breeze was blowing, and in the evening this picked up considerably so I was forced to find a sheltered spot to operate the lights. Most of the species I had come for put in an appearance, but in very small numbers. Three *Mythimna l-album* L. were early arrivals to the m.v. and later a couple of *Leucochlaena oditis* Hübn. arrived; another welcome visitor was a specimen of the very grey local form of *Polymixis flavicincta* D. & S. We operated the actinic light over a Robinson trap and in this way captured single specimens of *Aporophyla australis* Boisd. and *A. nigra.* Ivy bloom was disappointing with one *L. oditis* being the only thing of interest.

The final trip of any distance in 1973 was to Suffolk on 5th October where m.v. light a couple of miles from Tuddenham produced a good assemblage of macros of 21 species. *Chesias legatella* D. & S. occurred among broom bushes and later came readily to the light. *X aurago* was common but becoming worn and a number of species I seldom see turned up during the course of the evening. These included *D. eremita* (five specimens), *Dichonia aprilina* L. (one), *Rhizedra lutosa* Hübn. (two) and *Thera firmata* Hübn. (one).